(c) and (d) The Sri Lankan President reiterated the commitment of the Government of Sri Lanka to tackling the problem of straying fishermen in a humane and sympathetic manner. The Joint Press Statement issued after her visit states that "While agreeing to continue with the existing understandings on the humane treatment and early release of apprehended fishermen, it was decided to constitute a Joint Working Group which could meet frequently to deal with issues relating to straying fishermen, work out modalities for prevention of use of force against them and the early release of confiscated boats, and explore possibilities of working towards bilateral arrangements of licensed fishing."

Anti-Indian Organisations in Bangladesh

127. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that Anti-Indian Jehadi organisations are mushrooming in Bangladesh coupled with Bangladesh Foreign Minister tirade against India on 7th September 2004;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Bangladesh's Foreign Minister launched yet one more tirade against India on 7th September 2004;

(c) whether Government have lodged a formal protest to Bangladesh;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the response of Bangladesh Government thereto; and

(e) in what manner Government propose to deal with the threat to India's security?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Government has repeatedly taken up with the Government of Bangladesh, the issue of activities of Indian Insurgent Groups operating from Bangladesh soil. This Ministry has no information to verify whether these anti-India groups are jehadi in nature.

(b) Speaking at the inaugural session of the "India-Bangladesh Dialogue of Young Journalists" in Dhaka on Sept. 7, 2004, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mr Morshed Khan is reported to have made some negative remarks about India.

(c) Yes. The Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi was summoned by Foreign Secretary on Sept. 10, 2004, and the Government of India's surprise and dismay conveyed to him.

(d) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh issued a press release on Sept. 11, 2004 stating that the remarks of Bangladesh Foreign Minister were aimed at creating awareness among the young journalists of India and Bangladesh about the issues that govern Bangladesh-India relations and that it should be seen as such. The press release also said that the Foreign Minister expected that the young journalist would understand the issues in their right perspective and look at them dispassionately and objectively.

(e) The Government would continue to engage the Government of Bangladesh constructively to address our security concerns.

Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus Service

128. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foreign Ministers of Pakistan and India discussed the issue of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when the bus service between these two destinations is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) External Affairs Minister, Shri K. Natwar Singh, during his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on September 5-6, 2004 in New Delhi, discussed all bilateral issues, including the proposed bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad. They agreed to a technical meeting to discuss all isssues related to the commencement of the proposed service. This meeting is scheduled to be held in New Delhi on December 7-8, 2004.